



Wisconsin EMT Association A Statewide Injury Prevention Program

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) Office of Enforcement and Emergency Services has available the final report: **Wisconsin EMT Association: A Statewide Injury Prevention Program**. Funded by NHTSA, the Wisconsin EMT Association conducted a statewide injury prevention program to increase public awareness of the effects of impaired driving, the importance of safety belt use, and correct child safety seat use. The project involved emergency medical service (EMS) providers on a statewide basis in highway injury prevention efforts.

Many EMS providers are respected members of their community who volunteer their services. They are a valuable resource for conducting injury prevention programs, particularly in rural communities where they represent one of the few credible organizations available to conduct such programs. EMS providers speak of first hand experience of the disastrous results of not using safe driving practices.

The Wisconsin EMT Association trained approximately 350 EMS volunteers as injury prevention activists and helped them develop and conduct highway safety campaigns in their local communities. Built around the central theme of *Thank an EMT*, the injury prevention program had two primary components to change driving behaviors to prevent injuries. Two seminar series were offered throughout the State. One focused on advocacy of the use of occupant restraint systems and the other on the risks associated with impaired driving.

The **occupant protection program** addressed all age groups but placed strong emphasis on reaching young children. The Association used NHTSA's **Occupant Restraint Systems for EMS Personnel** curriculum to train EMS volunteers to teach occupant protection programs. The curriculum consists of Lesson Plans and an Instructor Guide specifically developed for EMS personnel. The Association offered its members additional support in conducting occupant protection programs, and assisted

local EMS organizations in promoting the use of occupant protection devices. The Association loaned its mascot *EMS Buckle Bear* costume to local EMS providers to use at elementary schools and local events.

The **impaired driving prevention program** was geared to young drivers, ages 16-22, who are statistically the most likely to be fatally injured in a crash involving alcohol. The seminar taught local EMS organizations how to conduct a *mock-crash* program for local high schools. The Association offered continued support in planning and conducting mock-crash programs.

EMS providers have an important role to play in injury prevention and public education. The Wisconsin EMT Association project demonstrated that EMS providers are willing and able to participate in organized injury prevention activities, and that these efforts may lead to improved highway safety. Future initiatives should evaluate the benefits of injury prevention activities for EMS providers -- such as lower emergency worker attrition rates and higher job satisfaction, as well as the effectiveness of the injury prevention programs in changing high risk behaviors.

The Wisconsin EMT Association Injury Prevention Program is described in more detail in the final report. This is an excellent resource for States and regional EMS organizations who are interested in injury prevention programs. For additional information about this project or a copy of the final report, contact: Emergency Medical Services Division, NTS-42, TSP, NHTSA, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

TRAFFIC TECH is a publication to disseminate information about traffic safety programs, evaluations, innovative programs, and new publications.

If you have interesting information to share with the traffic safety community, send your articles to the Evaluation Staff, Traffic Safety Programs, NHTSA, NTS-30, Room 5125, 400 Seventh Street, S.W., Washington, DC 20590.

